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Rom. Rev., IV, 166 ff.; Lucy A. Paton, *Rad. Coll. Mons.*, XV. Dr. MacCulloch's general conclusions should be checked up by comparison with Windisch's "Das keltische Brittanien bis zu Kaiser Arthur" (*Abhn. der königl. sächs. Gesell. der Wissn.*, Phil.-Hist. Kl., XXIX, 1912). Dr. MacCulloch almost entirely disregards the question of Celtic mythology in the Breton lays and the popular ballads (cf. *Rev. Celt.*, XXXI, 413 ff.; *Mod. Phil.*, XII, 585 ff.).

In the second section of the volume under discussion (pp. 221-314) Professor Máchal gives a clear and concise account of the myths of the Slavs, with a minimum of comment. The English translation is by Professor F. Krupicka. Since the notes were added by the general editor of the series, the author cannot be held responsible for their accuracy or completeness.

The final section (pp. 316-30), on Baltic mythology, is also by the editor.

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A TREATISE ON REST DAYS

This book¹ is an enlargement and elaboration of an article published in 1911 under the same title, and, as the author himself states in the Preface, "differs from its predecessor chiefly in providing a more extensive collection of the relevant data."

The origin of the Sabbath is a much-discussed question, and Professor Webster, by gathering together data relating to seasons and days of rest or cessation of labor among various peoples in different regions and periods, endeavors to establish a certain evolutionary tendency.

A survey of the evidence to be submitted indicates that the sabbatarian regulations have arisen chiefly, if not wholly, as pure superstitions, the product of an all-too-logical intellect or of a disordered fancy. In the last analysis they are based primarily on fear. . . . They find their clearest expression in the taboos, or prohibitions, first noticed among the natives of the South Seas, but now known to exist in many other regions of the aboriginal world. It is highly probable that the origin of some of the communal regulations is to be sought in the taboos observed by persons at such great and critical seasons as birth, puberty, marriage, and death. Comparative studies have indicated how numerous are the prohibitions which attach to these times of high solemnity and significance, and it is reasonable to suppose that, with the deepening sense

¹ *Rest Days: A Study in Early Law and Morality.* By Hutton Webster. New York: Macmillan, 1916. xiv+325 pages. \$3.00.

of social solidarity, observances once confined to the individual alone, or to his immediate connections, would often pass over into rites performed by the community at large.

Following out this idea Professor Webster brings together a mass of information relating to tabooed days and rest days at critical epochs, after deaths, and on related occasions, as found among various peoples. Not only are there these occasional tabooed, or rest, days, but there are others that occur at more or less regular intervals. "The greater number of periodic rest days observed by agricultural peoples in the lower stages of culture are associated with the institution of the market," and in some places they are kept very strictly as rest days at regular intervals the year round.

Another set of rest days is dependent upon the seasons, such as planting or harvest, or upon the movement of the heavenly bodies, among which the moon is by far the most important. "There is good reason for believing that among many primitive peoples the moon, rather than the sun, the planets, or any of the constellations, first excited the imagination and aroused feelings of superstitious awe or of religious veneration." Not only were there numerous superstitions and beliefs connected with the moon, some of which are found in civilized society even at the present time, but also "among many peoples in both the lower and the higher culture the time of new moon and full moon, much less commonly of each half moon, forms a season of restriction and abstinence." After numerous illustrations of these the author discusses lunar calendars, Babylonian "evil days," and the Hebrew Sabbath.

There is considerable evidence that the Hebrew term *Shabbath* was primarily used as the designation of the day of the full moon and later came to be applied to every seventh day. Professor Webster does not regard the Hebrew Sabbath as derived from Babylonia but considers both to have come from a common Semitic antiquity. "The ancient dwellers in the Arabian wilderness, who celebrated new moon and full moon as seasons of abstinence and rest, little dreamed that in their senseless custom lay the roots of a social institution, which, on the whole, has contributed to human welfare in past ages and promises an even greater measure of benefit to humanity in all future times." After a chapter on unlucky days, the author in his conclusion points out the disadvantage of the numerous tabooed, holy, and unlucky days among many peoples, and the social benefit of the transition of these holy days to holidays.

We are much indebted to Professor Webster for bringing together this mass of material relating to rest days of various kinds, and the copious footnotes make reference to the original sources easy. To what extent he regards these different sorts as related is not clearly brought out by the author. Also in some places generalizations occur which are not proved and to which exception might readily be taken. On the whole, however, his position is perhaps best illustrated by his explanation of the widespread occurrence and similarity of tabooed days.

Within contiguous areas, for example, in Borneo and the adjoining islands, or among related peoples, such as the American and Asiatic Eskimo, it is reasonable to ascribe the uniformity of custom to long continued borrowing. . . . But where tabooed days are observed for the same reasons by unrelated peoples, who, as far as our knowledge reaches, have never been in cultural contact, the student is obliged to conclude that the beliefs underlying the custom in question have not been narrowly limited but belong to the general stock of primitive ideas. In such cases the doctrine of the fundamental unity of the human mind seems alone to be capable of explaining the astonishing similarity of its products at different times and in different parts of the world.

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BOOKS ON THE HISTORICITY OF JESUS

In two volumes¹ the indefatigable Mr. Robertson returns to the demonstration that Jesus is a myth. The first of the two is an attempt to survey the positions of various writers who believe Jesus to be a historical figure, and to show them hopelessly wrong, both in their positive assumptions and in their objections to the myth theory. The second, though it has some controversial element, is in the main a presentation of Mr. Robertson's notion of how Christianity, with no Jesus and nothing corresponding to the gospel story, got started in the world. The whole is an impressive display of the extraordinary, futile ingenuity of which a gifted but unsound mind is capable. There is no reason why this sort of thing might not be written interminably, concerning any historic phenomenon whatsoever. What the author cannot see, though it must be plain to every reader, is that the infinitely involved and indirect procedure by which he represents the second-century church and its gospels to have come into being is a thousand times more incred-

¹ *The Historical Jesus*, 1916. xxiv+221 pages. 3s. 6d. *The Jesus Problem*, 1917. vii+264 pages. 5s. By John M. Robertson. London: Watts & Co.